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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, October 15, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "The Canny Carrot." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

I've never been able to learn who first tamed the wild carrot. I haven't even an idea in what far-away century that event took place. But I've often thought history should record this as a good job done for mankind. The common carrot weed with feathery leaves and a long thin root grows wild in both Europe and America. Once cultivated, that spindling root filled out, and from that day to this has provided us with one of the best of root vegetables.

You may be interested to know that the carrot is one of the least expensive means of getting the vitamin A which we all need so much in winter. Like other yellow vegetables, the carrot ranks high in this vitamin. Then, if you eat your carrot raw you'll also acquire some vitamin C. You can count on the carrot for certain useful minerals, too -- calcium, for example, and phosphorus. Carrots are easy to grow in the garden and usually inexpensive in the market, so, you see, they give you a good deal of food value for the money. What's more, the mature fall carrots keep well in storage, which means that you don't have to go to the bother of canning them. And finally, you can use them in many different ways, cooked or raw. So, if you have a drop of Scotch blood in you, you won't neglect a food bargain like the carrot this winter.

As no doubt you know, carrots come in two crops, the early and the late. The early or new carrots are usually for sale in bunches, three to five with the tops attached. The late crop is generally less expensive and on sale with the tops removed. The early-crop carrots are harvested before they are fully mature, so they are generally smaller, of a lighter color, and a milder flavor than those of the late-crop. Late crop carrots don't come out of the ground until they are mature, so they have time to store up a deeper color, a more pronounced flavor and more vitamin A. But sometimes they also have a coarser texture. Some experts hold that the sweetness of the carrot and also the best carrot flavor increase with maturity. The late crop is usually stored and marketed during the winter. Recently the new bunched carrots have also been appearing in the market most of the winter, shipped to the northern parts of the country from California and the South. So this year for winter meals you'll have your choice of the new, mild, delicately colored carrots or the late, richer in vitamin A, deeper in color, and more highly flavored storage crop.

In case you're interested in storing some of your own carrots this winter, here's what the experts advise. They say to use the fully ripe carrots in perfect condition and store them at a temperature of between 32 and 40 degrees F. Cut off the tops before storing them. Lay the carrots either loosely in crates or buried in sand. If the cellar is rather dry, sprinkle the sand with water every two or three weeks to keep them crisp. A slight freezing won't hurt carrots. They're hardy souls.

But after all, the proof of the carrot is in the eating. They can be some of the most delicious of all vegetables if they're cooked and seasoned and served wisely. And they won't get monotonous if you remember that they're versatile and fit into many different kinds of dishes. Fortunately, their orange-yellow color stands by with no trouble during the cooking. Even when they're badly overcooked, they still have that pleasant yellow shade. But for the best flavor and also the most food value, the usual rule for boiling vegetables applies. Cook in a small amount of lightly salted boiling water until just tender -- no longer. The lid can be on or off, as you please. You can also steam carrots. I know some families who always serve carrots the same old way -- creamed carrots or buttered carrots day after day. Too bad to let such a good vegetable grow tiresome! I know families who have never tried carrots sliced and fried with apples, say, or served whole with parsley butter. They don't know how good that faint lemon flavor in the parsley butter tastes, nor how pretty those green flecks of parsley look against the carrot yellow. And they never have imagined what a nice dish mashed carrots make -- carrots cooked until tender, drained, pressed through a colander and seasoned with cream, butter, salt and pepper. Some people I know have never tried their carrots a la Peter Rabbit either -- in crisp sticks to nibble like celery. And some have never thought of chopped raw carrot in salad -- cabbage salad or gelatin salad, for example. Too bad. Be adventurous with your carrots. They'll go a long way with you. They'll even make good custards and pie, and bright orange colored jam if you cook them with sugar, lemon and orange. You can even candy yellow carrot slices so they look like some strange tropical fruit confection.

But here it is time for the menu and a new carrot recipe to go along with it -- an inexpensive dinner for Monday featuring buttered carrots with spice. The menu: Pork chops; Mashed potatoes and gravy; Buttered carrots with spice; Autumn apple salad; Hot tea and Molasses cookies.

Now for the recipe: Six ingredients:

- 1 pound of sliced carrots
- 1 cup of boiling water
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of ginger or 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons butter

Once more. (REPEAT).

Wash and scrape the carrots and cut them in thin slices lengthwise. Add the salt, ginger and carrots to the boiling water. Cover and boil gently until tender. Drain if necessary. Add butter and serve.

